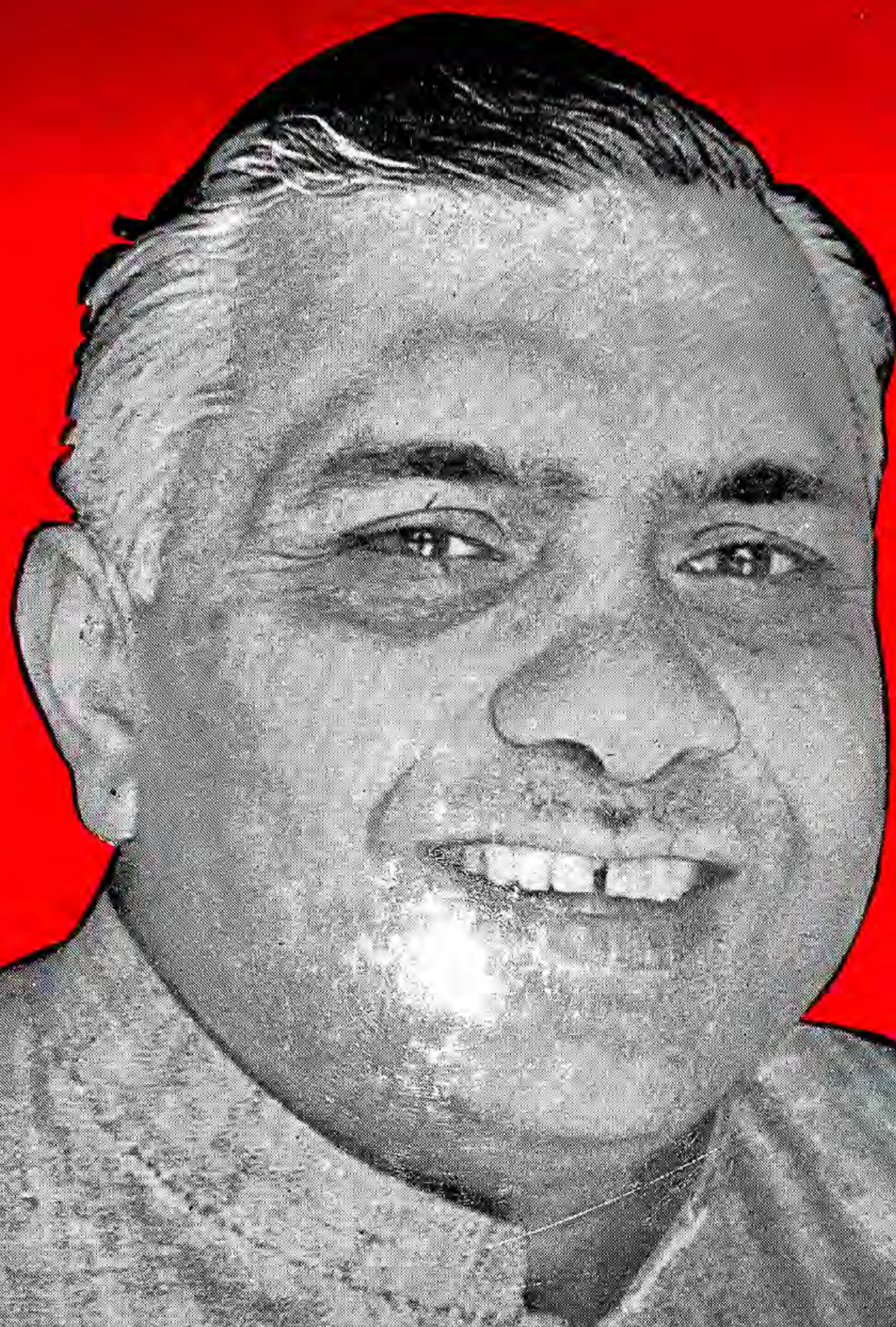


LALIT NARAIN MISHRA COMMEMORATION VOLUME

THE JOURNAL OF THE BIHAR RESEARCH SOCIETY, PATNA

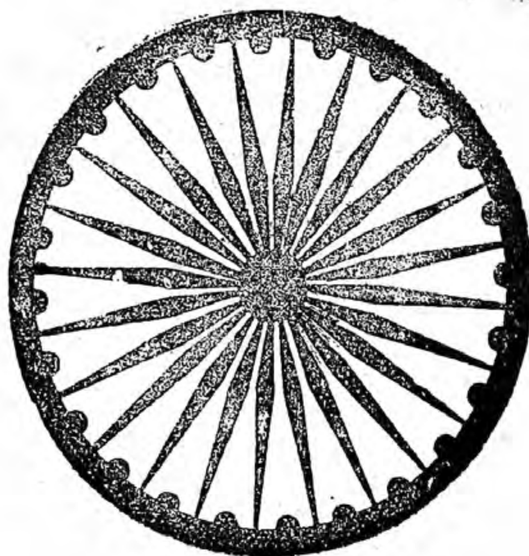
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L. N. MISHRA COMMEMORATION VOLUME

Vols. LXIII-LXIV

1977–1978

Chief Editor
Professor Upendra Thakur

Editor-in-Charge
Dr. K. K. Mandal



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PATNA

4, Giri Road,
T. Nagar, Madras 17,
13th December 1975

V. V. Giri,

Dear sir,

Thank you for your communication dated 6th Decr. I had the pleasure of knowing Shri L. N. Mishra from the time he became a Member of Parliament and later as a Deputy Minister, Minister of State and a Minister with Cabinet Rank. He engaged himself, during his life-time in serving the country and the nation to the best of his ability. He possessed a great amount of 'milk of human kindness' and rendered all possible help to those who came in contact with him. His untimely demise is a great loss to the country.

I am very happy that the Bihar Research Society has decided to bring out a special issue of its Journal as a Commemoration Volume in recognition of the services of the late Shri L. N. Mishra, Minister of Railways. I wish your endeavours all success.

Yours sincerely,
V. V. Giri

Governor of Bihar

RAJ BHAVAN
PATNA
February 16, 1976.

It is gratifying to know that the Bihar Research Society, Patna, is going to publish a Commemoration Volume in recognition of the services rendered by the late Union Railway Minister Shri L. N. Mishra. Shri Mishra was an efficient administrator, able statesman, astute politician, and above all a perfect gentleman. He was sagacious and magnanimous, who was eager to help each and every one who sought his help and guidance. It is hoped that the Special Journal to be published by the premier Research Institute of the State, which will have a number of illustrations, will enlighten its readers with the various aspects of the life of late Shri L. N. Mishra.

I convey my best wishes for the success of the publication.

R. D. Bhandare

ललिताष्टकम्

ललितो हि जनः सुगौरवं प्राप्नोतीत्यवगत्य नाम ते ।
अकरोत् स्वजनस्तथाविधं मन्येऽन्वर्थमिदं मुदावहम् ॥ १ ॥

ललितं विनयं विलोक्य ते जनसन्तापहरं शुभावहम् ।
जनता परितोषमन्वभूद् गुणलुब्धा गुणशालिनस्तव ॥ २ ॥

ललितेन विचारचञ्चुना मृदुना देशहितं विधित्सुना ।
जनता-हृदयाधिवासिना पटुना किन्न कृतं शुभं त्वया ॥ ३ ॥

ललिताय महत्त्वशालिने गुणधाम्ने महते यशस्विने ।
जनता-परिताप-हारिणे कृतिने शं कुरुतात् सदाशिवः ॥ ४ ॥

ललितान्नवनीतमानसाज्जनसन्तापहरादभूत् किल ।
करुणा वरुणालयापगा जनसन्तोषकरी शुभावहा ॥ ५ ॥

ललितस्य जनस्य सर्वदा वशगत्वं मनुजेन प्राप्यते ।
इति तस्य निदर्शनं जनास्त्वय्येवात्र सदा व्यलोकयन् ॥ ६ ॥

ललिते दिनकृद्विकासिते कमले श्रीं परिकल्पयत्यलौ ।
विधिना विमुखेन मृत्युना सशिफं तत् कमलं विनाशितम् ॥ ७ ॥

ललित ! बलितः-बन्धो ! भारतीयं विकासम्
महति जगति कर्तुं नाकरोः कं प्रयासम् ?
अविकलसफलत्वं तेऽवलोक्यात्र कश्चिद्
विधिहतमनुजत्वः क्रूरतां त्वय्यकार्षीत् ॥ ८ ॥

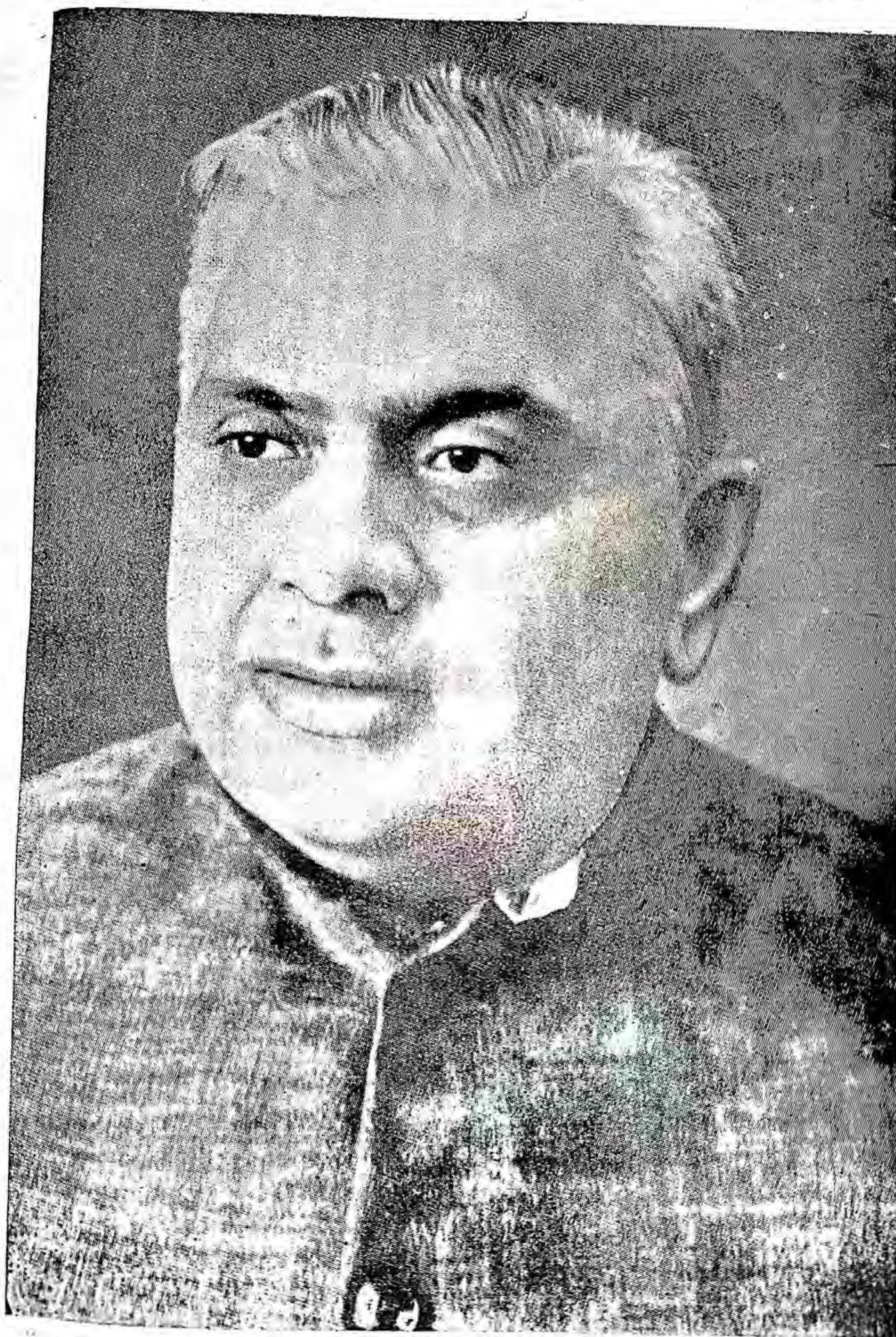
जयमन्तमिश्रः

Dr. K. K. Dutta
Former Vice-Chancellor,
Magadh and Patna Universities

Telephone No. 25739
BORING CANAL ROAD
PATNA-800001
Dated 24.2.1977

Late Shri Lalit Narayan Mishra, who became a martyr to the cause of patriotism, was known to me intimately as a boarder of the Postgraduate Hostel, Ranighat, when I was its Warden and he was its boarder as a student in the M. A. Economics classes of the Patna University. Most of the boarders of the Postgraduate Hostel formed the youthful intellectual cream of Bihar and in matters of maintaining healthy discipline and proper decorum and behaviour among the boarders I always received considerable help and advice from late Shri Lalit Narayan Mishra. A nationalist from the core of his heart he was also an ideal student then living in the Postgraduate Hostel, whose noble example will, I hope, inspire the living generation with high ideals. May his soul rest in Heaven !

K. K. Dutta



Late Pt. Lalit Narain Mishra
(b. 2 February 1923—d. 3 January 1975)

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Śrī Lalita Nārāyaṇa Mishra

Upendra Thakur

I

"Comrades of a life-time when I depart,
When I leave your brotherhood, send a
Thought of compassion to me.
With what wealth of sympathy and gift of
Love have you endowed me
I go, but leave my soul behind :
May your paths be smooth and soft until you
attain your journey's end."

These lines amply speak of the man, the bold and fearless, advocate of the down-trodden, the social thinker, the creative genius and, above all, a restless soul that Śrī Lalita Nārāyaṇa Mishra (popularly called Lalita Bābū) was. A born fighter against injustice, but a very loyal and devoted colleague and friend; one of the most cultured men of his generation and a giant among politicians, Lalita Bābū was one of those eminent sons of India who have left behind the impress of their remarkable personality far and wide. A great administrator of rare ability, a patron of art and artists (the famous Madhubanī painting, for instance), a born leader and inspirer of youth and a great man with rare common sense, sound judgment and unusual resources Lalita Bābū

had many things combined in one and filled many high offices with great distinction. He will always continue to live in the hearts of those who were privileged to have been associated with him whether as friends or as colleagues. A man of pleasing disposition and charming manners his attitude was never dubious and such was his dominating personality that where others canvassed he commanded, where others appealed he dictated. Lalita Bābū had passion for politics and politics was his forte. He had literally grown with it and ultimately passed out of it—the field of his life-long battles, his successes and truimphs—with undying fame and glory. The assassins' bomb was vanquished and the invincible soul truimphed.

II

Lalita Bābū was born in the family of the celebrated scholar, Ayāchī Mishra (Mahāmahopādhyāya Bhavanātha Mishra) who was the ideal of perfection among the Maithila Brāhmaṇas and who is reputed to have never accepted even a gift, much less asked for it, as a mark of respect for which he came to be known as 'Ayāchī' by which name he is still remembered with reverence by the posterity. His family has been serving the nation and the Congress since 1919 and has produced a revolutionary like Paṇḍita Teja Nātha Jhā who happened to be a close associate of Sardar Bhagat Singh; an agitator like Śrī Upendra Mishra who fell a victim to the violent British retaliation while in prison in connection with "Quit India" movement; and a successful scholar-administrator like Dr. Jagannātha Mishra, his youngest brother, who is presently the Chief Minister of Bihar. Thus, patriotism, indomitable courage and self-respect flowed through his veins which he was not prepared to compromise at any cost.

Born at village Bajitpur in Muzaffarpur district (the family has since then shifted to Baluā Bāzār in Saharsā district) on 2 February 1923, this prince among men received his early educatiou at C. M. College, Darabhaṅgā and T. N. J. (now T. N. B.) College, Bhāgalpur where he impressed his teachers and colleagues alike through his brilliance and sincerity of purpose. He took his M. A. degree in Economics from Patna University, got himself enrolled as a research scholar for Ph. D. degree and did extensive research on "*Nineteenth Century Colonial Policy of the British empire*". However, he could not complete

his Ph. D. thesis as, at the call of the Father of the Nation he too, like many other young men, plunged deep into the national struggle for independence against the alien rulers. While a research scholar he was appointed a lecturer in economics in T. N. J. College and when he showed the appointment letter to his father, the latter felt disgusted and told him bluntly : "I shall give you double the amount you will receive as lecturer every month. Do not worry for money. Devote yourself wholeheartedly to the cause of the nation and the society." When the Late Dr. S. K. Sinha, the Chief Minister of Bihar, wanted Lalita Bābū to take to a lucrative job in the U. N. O., the father once again came in his way and advised him to give up this idea once for all. Here was a great father who could easily visualise the great future of his son and was prepared to make any sacrifice so that his son could climb to the highest peak of fame and glory. Thus, though the world of letters could not benefit from his scholarship and researches, the nation as a whole gained immensely from his vast experiences and exemplary sacrifices as he literally gave away his every ounce of energy and blood to the cause of socialism, secularism and democracy which was so dear to him.

A whole-time Congress worker since 1939, Lalita Bābū organised the Bihar Provincial Students' Congress in 1941 and became its secretary in 1944-46, and later its president in 1946-48. He underwent two terms of imprisonment in 1941 and 1942 when he was sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment for participation in the freedom movement. In 1948-49 he was elected a Fellow of the Patna University Senate in recognition of his services to the cause of education. He organised the first Bihar Economic Conference in 1950 at Patna, and as secretary of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee's Economic and Food Departments, he carried out extensive research on jute cultivation and a survey of the food situation in Bihar. A member of the A. I. C. C. till his death, Lalita Bābū was also a member of the Working Committee, secretary of the Bihar Economic Association and president of the Bihar Jute Growers' Association.

Another notable event of his life was his election to the Loka Sabhā for the first time in 1952 and during this period he became a member of the Estimates Committee in 1955-56 and a member of the National Advisory

Committee for Small Savings in 1956-57. During the period 1954-57 he was also incharge of public co-operation work of the Bhārata Sevaka Samāja for the Kośī project.

III

While talking to a friend Lalita Bābū had once remarked : "People will recognise me only after my death. I have done nothing for myself, and whatever I have done, I have done for my country, and for my people." How apt this remark is can be judged from his ceaseless efforts to tame the Kośī, the river of sorrow, which had literally ravaged almost the whole of north Bihar for a long time and which had earned him the nickname of "Kośī Bābū" from the rustic village-folk who were the worst victims of its vagaries and desolation owing to its devastating floods. The great Bihar earth-quake in 1934 had changed the terrain of almost the whole of north Bihar and it deflected the Kośī 50 miles away from its course. In one swing the river had leaped from Purniā to Saharsā and had hit the neighbourhood of Nirmalī (in Darabhaṅgā) and swept the country-side clean of every thing in the way—the railway lines, villages, town-ships etc. It had turned green fields into sandy stretches of waste. In the monsoon the entire countryside, ten miles on each side of the river, became a rolling mass of water. This is where people suffered the worst hazards of human existence through floods, diseases and death but they managed to survive.

Nirmalī on the western fringe of the Kośī belt (there was neither valley nor marked water-course) and Supaul on the eastern flank, were the two God-forsaken places in north Bihar until they became the headquarters of the Kośī embankment project. It was a Himalayan task that was completed through the efforts of this promising young man on whose call the peasants had co-operated beyond expectation by surrendering their valuable paddy-land and orchards for the embankment, which later saved millions of lives, without receiving a single copper as compensation. On the level of physical labour about fifty thousand workers were secured through village pañchāyats or labour co-operatives in the neighbourhood of the embankments. There was no profit motive as distinguished from work under contractors. The only aim was to complete the 30-mile long embankment and to ensure that all the money went



The Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru administering the oath of secrecy to Pt. L. N. Mishra as Parliamentary Secretary. (p. 4)



Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi counselling Pt. L. N. Mishra (p. 5)

to workers. A baffling human problem was thus ably solved through 7 months of trials and tribulations and the river of sorrow was in no time turned into the river of plenty and happiness which won him unstinted praise from Pandit Nehru, and the whole nation. It was therefore no wonder that the once afflicted people wept and cried over the tragic death of their beloved "Kośī Bābū" the man who was mainly responsible for turning the desert of the Kośī belt into a granary by getting the Kośī Project with its irrigation facilities. And, it was where he started to blaze a controversial career and that is where the fate had ordained his tragic end, but his memory will endure.

IV

Lalita Bābū's re-election to the Loka Sabhā in 1957 paved way for his further successes and truimphs. Pandit Nehru was so pleased with his dynamism and magnetic personality, which he had shown at the time of Kośī-embankment, that he appointed him Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Planning, Labour and Employment, and in 1960 he became deputy Minister in the same ministry. During this period he was a delegate to the 42nd Session of the International Labour Organisation at Geneva and visited the United States to study industrial relations in coal and steel industries. During 1962-64 he was Chairman of the National Projects Construction Corporation Limited. He became General Secretary of the All India Bhārat Sevak Samāj and the Indian Steel Workers' Federation in June 1962. A member of the Working Committee of the Bihar INTUC he was also a member of the working Committee of the All India General Council of the INTUC and also editor of the *Congress Forum*, a journal of the Congress forum for socialist action.

Lalita Bābū was appointed deupty Minister of Home Affairs on 26 February, 1964. He was elected to the Rājya Sabhā in February 1964 and was re-elected in 1966 and remained its member until his election to the Loka Sabhā in 1971. On 25 January, 1966 he was transferred as Deputy Minister for Finance in which capacity he attended the Colombo Plan Conference at Karāñchī in 1966 and the governing body session of the I. L. O. held in Geneva in October 1967. On 13 March, 1967 he was appointed Minister of State for Labour and Re-habilitation. On 15 November, 1967 he became Minister for Defence Production.

From June 1970 to 2 January 1975 is a telling story of Lalita Bābū's great truimphs and glory as well as the impending shadows that ultimately overwhelmed him. As Minister of Foreign Trade from June 1970 to 4 February, 1973 he showed his great mark as this period witnessed the increasing tempo of export promotion and state participation in foreign trade. He led the Indian delegation to the Second UNCTAD Conference at Santiago in Chile and also organised the Third Asian Trade Fair known as *ASIA—72* in New Delhi.

As an organiser and devoted worker he grew in popularity to such an extent that he was unanimously elected amember of the Congress Working Committee at the Bidhan Nagar Congress Session in December, 1972 and on 5 February, 1973 he was appointed Minister of Railways with cabinet rank. As Minister of Railways he excelled all his predecessors, and Bihar and other backward states got their due for the first time after 27 years of independence. Once he was asked as to how he sanctioned new railway lines for backward areas when the development of the railways is ordinarily guided by the policy that new rail tracks should be laid in areas where there is no likelihood of loss. To this he retorted : "according to this policy no new railway line can ever be laid in backward regions." He believed that it was necessary to have a network of railway lines even in the backward regions to ensure national development. As for loss he was confident that once the backwardness was removed, there would be no deficit, no loss. He had the courage of his convictions and he set about the task with a singleness of purpose. He rendered a yeoman's service to Bihar and particularly to Mithilā by providing a network of rail lines; long-distance comfortable trains such as Jayantī Janatā, Jānakī Express etc. by sanctioning new broad gauge and metre gauge railway lines; by establishing a Railway Service Commission at Muzaffarpur and in many other ways. And, while making a gift of the 53 K. M. B. G. line to the people of north Bihar he fell a victim to the assassins' bomb at Samastipur on 2 January. The speech delivered by him at Samastipur on this fateful day etched out ambitious plans of broad gauge lines in the state and a railway bridge near Patna. This shows how anxious he was to serve the state. But, the hands of the assassins suddenly snatched him away from our midst. There can be no greater heinous crime than this and history has a few parallels to record. Ingratitude, thy name is politics !

On the national scene what Lalita Bābū achieved, others could not. As leader of the official Indian delegations he visited a number of countries in Asia, Europe and north and south America. He led the Indian delegation to the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) at Hongkong and Manila, and attended the meeting of the 77 developing countries at Lima, Peru that preceded it. He conducted negotiations in England with the British Government on trade preferences and with the French Government in Paris on economic relations between India and the European Economic Community. He visited the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary for trade talks with the governments of those countries. He also visited Pakistan, Switzerland, United States, Hongkong, Belgium and many other countries in connection with official business and left the mark of his personality wherever he went.

V

A man of strong convictions he did not believe in "Sermon on the Mount". His intelligence and commonsense were unfathomable and his actions were always practical and helpful to the nation at large. His benevolence knew no bounds, and even if he erred, it was not without virtue. Only those who never met Lalita Bābū might have nursed a grievance against him, true or false. But, even his bitterest critics and die-hard enemies could not remain immune from his magnetic personality and became his admirers only after first meeting. His geniality of temperament, urbanity, generosity and magnanimity were legendary and any one who came into contact with him became his friend. Even those who indulged in vicious columny against him received his help and patronage in times of need and distress of which innumerable instances can be cited.

His interest in Bihar was so great that he could go to any length to achieve his objects, economic or political or social, for the upliftment of this state. If late Dr. S. K. Sinha maintained political stability with his stature and wide outlook, Lalita Bābū was like the beacon-light who not only nurtured Congress in Bihar and maintained political stability and Congress majority against all odds but also put the state at an important place on the national map with his dynamism, large-heartedness and towering personality. For over a decade he dominated the politics of this state in a measure which no other politician of

his age had done so far. His advice was listened to with due attention by the Congress High Command and he had virtually become an authority on Bihar affairs in the Prime Minister's inner circle. His sincerity to the cause of the country and the Congress was never doubted. Inspite of the blistering attack by the opposition on the Licence Scandal, the Prime Minister Smt. Indirā Gāndhī stood by him like rock and this was no mean tribute to Lalita Bābū who had then the foreign trade portfolio. His speech given to the House (Loka Sabhā) on this occasion speaks of his sincere devotion to the cause of the country and also of high integrity that he possessed. He had thus weathered the Parliamentary storm which any other person of less calibre would have succumbed to, and his political life would have ended. But, Fate had willed it otherwise. He was to die as a martyr for the welfare of the people whom he had pledged to serve ever since his student career.

VI

Great in life and still greater in death Lalita Bābū fell the first victim to Indian fascism on 3 January, 1975 which will go down in the history of India as the blackest day. His phenomenal rise to power and fame had won him innumerable enemies who were convinced that so long as he was on the scene, it was difficult for them to achieve their sinister target. In order to attain their goal they took to the worst form of columny and character-assassination unheard of in the history of civilised political life. "Give the dog a bad name and then hang him" is an old fascit technique which believes in first destroying a man's reputation by mounting a virulent campaign of character-assassination and then killing him. First make a mountain out of a molehill of a Tulmohan Ram, then throw a hand-grenade to eliminate Lalita Nārāyaṇa Mishra physically. Every body knows that Lalita Bābū and Smt. Gāndhī had been the two prime targets of a country-wide hate compaign for the past several months. And, this campaign was bound to result in something like the shame and tragedy of Samastipur. But, those who organised this great killing have not yet achieved their political aim. And, Lalita Bābū has not died in vain. He shall always live in the hearts of the grateful people as the first martyr in the Indian people's fight against social injustice and economic tyranny.

A man with a large range of interests, a brilliant mind and a prodigious memory Lalita Bābū had sanity, tolerance and independence of spirit, and these



Late Pt. L. N. Mishra worshiping Lord Śiva at Baidyanātha Dhāma (p. 8)

were the attributes that the world could see things "that took the eye and had the price". Quick to discover talent he was ever ready to foster it with the touch of the creator and the finished skill of a master craftsman. In fact, he always shone in his true colours, never in borrowed feathers. His brilliance was pure gold, no gliding above the brass.

It is said whom the Gods love die young, and Lalita Bābū was not old when he, who left many speechless by his eternal silence on 3 January, 1975. In him we have lost a true son of India embued with own Indian culture; in him we have lost a great patriot and administrator; in him we have lost a great friend who was genuinely loved by his people; in him we have lost a great patron of art who was at the same time a great champion of poor; in him we have lost a great giver of gift who gave away thousands to his friends and critics alike, but himself died in debts; and in him we have lost a perfect gentleman, large-hearted, generous to a fault, and loyal to friends throughout his life—the like of whom we shall never see again.

Lalita Bābū—A Tribute to his Memory

Jagannāth Mishra

Lalita Bābū was eldest amongst our five brothers and I was the youngest. My father loved Lalita Bābū to his utmost and Lalita Bābū loved me to his utmost. I can not offer any explanation for his affection towards me, excepting that I was the youngest amongst the brothers. Lalita Bābū was not only like a father to me, but there was something more than that in him. It appears that some unmanifest power had tied us together in the bonds of affection and attachment. That was a kind of relationship which cannot be described in words.

I recollect Lalita Bābū as one who is bathed in divine aura and has raised his hands on me in grace and blessing. I used to get opportunities to live with Lalita Bābū when I was a student in college. He used to look after my studies and also cared for my health. After the vacation, whenever I used to leave my home for college, he used to give me some extra amount for my pocket-money. I found Lalita Bābū as an alert, intelligent and well-meaning guardian during my student days.

The members of my family, specially my father and uncle took keen interest in the freedom-movement. My cousin-brother Pt. Rājendra Mishra was taking active part in the struggle for independence. Lalita Bābū also was a born patriot and he had a craving to drive away the British and make the country free. The atmosphere in our family was also congenial to his attitude and aptitudes. My father also encouraged him to participate in freedom movement. Lalita Bābū became a member of the Thana Congress Committee while he was still a student in 1940. He took an active part in the Quit India Movement of 1942 and faced all odds with a spirit of dare and adventure. He received a bullet in his leg and was awarded imprisonment for four years. But this did not deter neither my father, nor my brother, Lalita Bābū. My father often used to meet Lalita Bābū in jail, but the idea of getting him released by asking

a pardon did not enter his mind. But he preferred an appeal in the High Court which reduced the sentence and Lalita Bābū was released after spending some time in prison.

Lalita Bābū had extraordinary qualities of organisation and leadership right from his student days. He studied at Chandradhārī Maithila College, Tejanārāyaṇa Jubilee College and Patna College. Everywhere he took interest in the Chhātra Congress and drew out students who were dedicated and devoted to the national cause. Lalita Bābū was a popular figure amongst the students and was endeared and loved by his friends and contemporaries. The affluence of our family had made Lalita Bābū very liberal and charitable. I may say that he had become very free with money. He had high regard and consideration for his poor friends and he often provided them with cloth, blankets and funds. Once some of his indigent friends came to see him and told him that they had no money to pay their examination fees. Lalita Bābū had to sell the ornaments of his wife on that occasion to meet the expense of his friends. Any body who came to ask was provided by Lalita Bābū, no one ever went disappointed.

These qualities of his head and heart made Lalita Bābū very popular. His liberalism, his warmth, his sympathy, his humility and his eagerness to serve immediately left an imprint on whoever came into his contact. He had become immensely popular among students. He had organised a big conference of Chhātra Congress in Patnā in 1946. Later Lalita Bābū did his M. A. in Economics and got himself registered for Ph.D. In the meanwhile, he got an appointment of Lecturer in Economics in the T. N. B. College at Bhāgalpur. When Lalita Bābū sought the permission of his father to join this post, he became very angry. He knew the possibilities and potentialities of Lalita Bābū and did not like the idea of his son joining any service. He said that Lalita Bābū would be getting double the amount of what he would receive as lecturer so he should not worry about his employment, and devote heart and soul in social and national work.

Lalita Bābū once more got an offer of employment with higher emoluments, but father again came in the way.

Dr. Shrikrishna Singh was the Chief Minister of Bihar at that time, and he was highly impressed with the capabilities of Lalita Bābū. He wanted to send

Lalita Bābū to the interim Parliament, but could not do so for various reasons. Then we wanted Lalita Bābū to go on some high position in the U. N. O., but again father came with a forbidding attitude.

Lalita Bābū was elected a member of the All India Congress Committee in 1950. He made his mark there and people of his area felt that Lalita Bābū was a man of promise. Our district Saharasā is one of the most backward areas of Bihar. A decade and a half ago it was atill more steeped in backwardness. This area had to suffer the ravages of the floods of Kosī. The common people of this district had seen poverty in its worst form. The name of the district is Saharasā, which means an area full of joy. But the prevailing conditions were just the contrary to this name. Lalita Bābū set himself to change this picture of misery and to give a new shape to the area according to its name. The people of the area also found a natural leader in Lalita Bābū. They felt that Lalita Bābū's endeavours would succeed and they would be able to come out of the woods. Lalita Bābū also went among the people and met them with all frankness, discussed their problems with all sincerity and tried his best to solve them. He had no regards for his personal discomforts, he met them on equal footing and the people felt that Lalita Bābū was like their own brother. People had unstinted affection for Lalita Bābū. He also rendered financial assistance to a large number of people. All these made him immensely popular and he won Loka Sabhā elections in 1952 with a heavy margin over his rivals.

People often forget their constituency after their elections. But Lalita Bābū did not do so. He had organised a conference of Kosī-sufferers when he was doing his M. A. He had drawn the attention of Dr. Rājendra Prasād and other leaders of the country towards the sad plight of the inhabitants of the Kosī basin. As a member of Parliament, he spoke several times on this subject and made Pandit Jawāharlāl Nehru, the then Prime Minister interested in the solution of this problem. Lalita Bābū was known as "Kosiī Misra" in Parliament, because of his untiring zeal for the solution. He had completely identified himself with mother-land and his people. The title "Kosī-Misra" is a pointer towards this identification.

The First Five Year Plan had already been introduced when Lalita Bābū joined the Loka Sabhā in 1952. He brought Pandit Jawāharlāl Nehru and Dr.

Shrikrishna Singh to the scene when Kosī brought its ravages in 1954. He was constantly pleading the case of Kosī in the Loka Sabhā. It was largely due to his efforts that the Kosī Project was included in the First Five Year Plan and a beginning towards its implementation was made in 1955. Lalita Bābū organised people's participation in the project at the instance of Pandit Jawāharlāl Nehru and Śrī Gulzārilāl Nandā. The Bhārat Sevak Samāj also offered its helping hand in this work. Shramadān was offered by a large number of people resulting in early construction of embankments. This arrangement meant less profits to the contractors and the middle men but more wages to the labourers. A large number of persons found employment in the Kosī Project and an era of happiness began dawning in this area.

Lalita Bābū was instrumental for the implementation of multi-development schemes in the Kosī area and used the agency of Bhārat Sewak Samāj for this purpose. He also came to the rescue of jute-growers whose plight had become miserable, because of the constantly falling price of jute. He placed this question in Parliament. He also discussed the question of the reconstruction of railway lines damaged by the Kosī floods.

He got an opportunity to give shape to this ideas when he became Deputy Minister in the Department of Labour in the Central Government. He, after some time, was entrusted the Department of Foreign Trade and then became a Minister in the Central Cabinet incharge of the Railways. The Kosī was tamed to a large extent by the construction of barrage and embankment. This made the area comprising the districts of Saharasā, Pūrniā and Darabhaṅgā immune from floods. The irrigation net-work set up on the eastern side of Kosī changed the entire landscape and life began to smile. Lalita Bābū also made efforts to get the scheme of irrigation net work sanctioned for the western side of Kosī and a beginning was made on 30 January, 1974. He had discussed this question with the Nepal Government when he visited that country as Indian Minister of Foreign Trade. He was also instrumental in the establishment of Jute Corporation and was able to arrest the fall in price of jute. His interest also led to the reconstruction of railway lines long lying disrupted in the Kosī area.

Lalita Bābū loved the land when be was born and also the people of his area. The people also reciprocated in equal measure. But this does not mean

that he neglected people of other areas and treated them indifferently. He knew that Bihar as a whole was a backward and a poor state. He wanted to do away with the backwardness of Bihar and wanted the State to catch up with the other developed states of the country. He very often referred to the backwardness of Bihar and drew up various schemes and implemented them through the various Ministries where he held office. He established Bihar Export Corporation when he was Minister for Foreign Trade. He also opened an office of the Railway Public Service Commission at Muzaffarpur which opened the gate of opportunities to the youngmen of north Bihar to find employment. He sanctioned the extension of broad gauge line from Samastipur to Barabanki. He helped in the establishment of Mithilā University in Darabhangā for expading the scope, quality and content of education in north Bihar. He got a survey made for laying new railway lines in Rāmpur, Dumkā, Gayā, Rājagir, Rānchī and Lohardāgā in south Bihar. Ultimately he gave away his life while performing a public duty and achieving the goal of taking Bihar to the highest peak of achievement.

Lalita Bābū was the son of Bihar. Naturally he had a fondness for his State. But he also served the country as a whole and made significant contribution to the national good and well-being of common people. He was responsible for the increase in the out-put of defence equipments when he was Defence Production Minister. This led to the victory of our nation in the war which Pakistan had waged against us in 1971. The studies in Economics came to the aid of Lalita Bābū when he gave a tangible and practical shape to the export-promotion policy and was able to get a favourable trade balance for his country. Whenever he visited foreign lands, he maintained the dignity and honour of his country and gave evidence of his merit and efficiency.

Lalita Bābū possessed an extraordinary capacity of setting up and controlling organisations. This became evident to us when the Congress was split up in two parts in 1969. All top leaders of the Congress were in favour of the Syndicate Congress. Lalita Bābū alone sided Shrīmatī Indirā Gāndhī and it was largely due to his efforts that the Congress came out victorious in the General Elections held in 1971 and 1972. His sincerity and complete dedication to the cause brought results and on both the occasions the Congress won with

overwhelming majority. Lalita Bābū had also great love for his mother tongue, Maithilī. He loved it as his mother. He got opportunities to visit many foreign lands and to meet many people, but he had so deeply imbibed the culture of his motherland that there was absolutely no question of his coming under any kind of foreign influence. He was an ardent supporter of Indian culture and was ever ready to do anything for the development of arts, culture and literature of the country. This explains his deep and abiding interest in the Madhubanī School of Painting, which subsequently led to its regeneration and recognition of its merit in all the corners of the world.

It is now our responsibility to carry on the work of Lalita Bābū, which remained unfinished because of his tragic and cruel demise. Lalita Bābū had intense love for me and I realise my responsibility in this respect. I came to politics to work as an aid and assistant to Lalita Bābū. That is why I felt that I had no business to stay in politics after he was gone. Lalita Bābū was a committed, dedicated and devoted follower of Prime Minister Shrīmatī Indirā Gāndhī. He had offered all his energies and all that he possessed for achieving the objective set up by Shrīmatī Gāndhī.

Lalita Bābū now has gone to his heavenly abode. It is now our responsibility to take up the work that was in Lalita Bābū's hand and following his foot-steps do all in our capacity to strengthen the power and prestige of Shrīmatī Indirā Gāndhī.

Secondly Lalita Bābū wanted to put Bihar on the all India map and desired its all round development. He wanted an early end of his State's backwardness and rise of new Bihar in all its majesty, might and glory. We have to crystalize the dream of Lalita Bābū. Following the foot steps of my late lamented brother, I have offered my life for the service of the poor and down-trodden people of Bihar. I am detemined to avenge the cruel murder of Lalita Bābū by the Fascist maunaders and this can be done by faithfully and successfully implementing the 20 point programme of economic development. This will strengthen socialism and democracy and usher a new era of peace, progress and prosperity in our State and in our country.

Lalita Bābū as I knew him

Madaneshwar Mishra

It was in the year 1943 that I met Lalita Bābū for the first time. Both of us were studying at T. N. B. College, Bhāgalpur for an Honours degree in Economics. Both of us were boarders, but we lived in different hostels. I cannot explain how a mutual understanding and intimacy sprang up between us and how we were drawn closer to each other day by day.

Not long after our first introduction I went to see Lalita Bābū in his room. He introduced me to a gentleman whom he described as his father-in-law. At the mention of this relationship I became a little formal and sitff. But Lalita Bābū asked me not to be formal, for though a father-in-law that gentleman treated him as a friend.

The gentleman in question was Shrī Tejanāth Jhā jī. As freedom fighters they had spent many days together in jail. Therefore, the customary distance between the in-laws of Mithilā (so rigidly observed in those days) had disappeared. Lalita Bābū in fact held him in high esteem. The day he told me about his death he looked visibly moved and grief-stricken. If I remember aright, he also mentioned that it was because of tortures in jail that he had died a premature death.

Our hostel was situated on the outskirts of Bhāgalpur town. Often we had to go to the town to meet our teachers in connection with our studies, but we had no conveyance. So we jointly purchased a cycle and during our stay at Bhāgalpur both of us used that cycle. On some occasions we had to ride together. Lalita Bābū would drive the cycle while I would sit on the carrier behind. It certainly caused him inconvenience but he would say that it would be more inconvenient for him if I drove and he sat on the carrier. In fact he was not destined to be carried by anybody. On the contrary, Providence had been grooming him for carrying the burdens of thousands of compatriots like me.

We completed our course of studies at Bhāgalpur very happily and in 1945 both of us got ourselves admitted to the M. A. class in economics at the

Patna College. Lalita Bābū resided in P. G. Hostel while I was a boarder of the Muslim Hostel, now called Īqbal Hostel. We met each other frequently and used to comment on the performance of different teachers. Prof. Sachin Dutta, erstwhile Vice-Chancellor of Patna University, was our teacher. He taught us political science. We were ardent admirers of his methods of teaching.

From his very student days Lalita Bābū had been deeply involved in political activities. For his active participation in the freedom struggle he had been put behind the bars also. While in Bhāgalpur I had often found him discussing politics with Kāmatā Bābū (Shri Kāmatā Pd. Gupta of Saharasā). I was just a passive listener. At Patna the scope of Lalita Bābū's politics widened further for he was a leader of the student congress. As far as I remember it was under the leadership of Lalita Bābū along with Balirām Bābū (Shri Balirām Bhagat), Smt. Tārakeshwarī Sinha and others that the students of Patna accorded rousing reception to Pt. Nehru when he visited Patna. I have mentioned only three persons because they were all my classmates. On one occasion Moulānā Āzād came to deliver convocation address at the Patna University. Lalita Bābū and Balirām Bābū decided to present an address of welcome to the Moulānā on behalf of the students congress. They jointly drafted the address but they were not happy with their handwriting. Time was short and the address had to be presented. Moreover, it had to be framed. Finding them in a fix, I went up to them. Lalita Bābū almost coaxed and cajoled me into writing it out in my own hand because I wrote a good hand. I wrote it out and they were highly pleased. Not that I think very highly of my own handwriting, I only want to state that Lalita Bābū liked my handwriting. My own remark about his handwriting was "Your handwriting is legible but not beautiful". I fondly remember how my remark made him happy. We stayed together at Patna for three years. If I remember aright both of us were admitted into the Law College but I seldom met him there.

While in Patna I discoverd that Lalita Bābū held Śrī Bābū and Anugrah Bābū in high esteem. Even during student days, he would call on them frequently and basked in their affection. He had unflinching faith in Nehru. He had read all his books published till that date. He also looked up to Shrī Guljārīlāl Nandā with deep regard. He had not the slightest shadow of doubt

in his mind that it was through the Congress organization that the country would forge ahead and attain Swarāj. I also remember that it was his constant endeavour to free Bihar from the havoc wrought by the river Kośī. He felt that there should be an independent ministry dealing with the problems created by the 'Sorrow of North Bihar' so as to ensure a speedy and permanent solution of the problems.

Then came August 15, 1947. India became independent. We did not have a wink of sleep that night. At the stroke of 12, the night resounded with the blowing of conches and shouting of slogans. There was illumination all around. Our M. A. Examination was to start very soon. The frenzy of rejoicing caused some sort of disruption in the preparations of students like me also, not to speak of student leaders like Lalita Bābū and Balirām Bābū. Therefore, it occurred to us to do something to get the date of examination extended. Accordingly a delegation of 30 or 40 students of the Patna University waited on the Vice-Chancellor with this appeal. Sir C. P. N. Sinha gave us a patient hearing but he expressed his inability to oblige us. He however assured us that there would be gaps between papers and thus in effect we got that we desired. We again plunged ourselves into preparations. One day, when I came across Lalita Bābū he wanted me to accompany him to the residence of his elder brother, Rājendra Mishra, in the 'R' Block. His object was to chalk out a plan for the preparation of the ensuing examinations. We stayed together at the 'R' Block for several days and succeeded in preparing answers to some important questions after several days of joint studies. One of the questions pertained to 'High Command' in our political science paper. It was an important question. Before that I had a very hazy notion about High Command, but Lalita Bābū for the first time enlightened me on the structure, nature and functions of the High Command and threw lucid light on all the aspects of the Congress in general and the High Command in particular. Little did I know then that one day he would himself become a member of the Congress High Command.

After passing the M. A. Examination we lost touch with each other. Lalita Bābū became deeply absorbed in national politics and I became lecturer at the Pūrneā College. During our post-graduate days, I remember having

heard Lalita Bābū say, while chalking out plans for future life, that he would be only too glad to avail himself of an opportunity of going abroad on some assignment at the U. N. O. He never thought of seeking a job, for he was deeply interested in national affairs. This, of course, refers to those days when those engaged in active politics were held in the highest esteem.

Years afterwards, when I was Principal, Pūrneā College, he came to Pūrneā at my request on the occasion of the Annual Vidyāpati Parva. At that time Lalita Bābū was a Minister of the Union Government, but neither the intervening years nor his elavated status had wrought any change in him; he was the same unassuming, affectionate Lalita Bābū as I had known during my student days. It is said that power goes to the head of a man, but power could not corrupt Lalita Bābū.

When I went to Delhi in 1971 to participate in the All India Economics Conference, I called on him nearly forty eight hours after my arrival in Delhi. He reproached me for this delay. And then we started reminiscing.

After I became Vice-Chancellor, L. N. Mithila University, I had the pleasure of meeting him several times at Darabhaṅgā and also at Delhi. After he had become Railway Minister, I asked him once : "How do you sanction new railway lines for backward areas when the development of the railways is ordinarily guided by the policy that new rail tracks should be laid in areas where there is no likelihood of loss ?" He retorted that according to this policy no new railway line can ever be laid in backward regions. His argument was that in order to ensure national development it was necessary to have a network of railway lines even in the backward regions. As for loss, he was confident that once the backwardness was removed there would be no deficit. He had the courage of his convictions and he set about the task with a singleness of purpose. By providing long-distance comfortable trains, by sanctioning new broad gauge and metre gauge railway lines and in various other ways he rendered a yeoman's service to Bihar, particularly to Mithilā.

Lalita Bābū is no more in our midst, but his memory will remain enshrined in the hearts of millions of people of Bihar for ages to come.

Lalita Bābū—As I Knew Him

Hiranand Jha

The soul of the world is a force that tends automatically to equilibrium either Will must predominate over it or it conquers the Will. It is tormented by the incompetency of human life as if this were a monstrosity and it strives therefore to absorb intellectual perversions and spiritual abortions. Human life manifests by movement, movement is perpetuated by equilibrium. Consciousness is the awareness of equilibrium which is equality and justice. When this eternal value is challenged by irregular 'magnets' the soul of the world is deranged and violent commotions follow and to meet such challenges Providence interferes and creates super personalities to get things back to the right track. 'Whenever spirituality decays and materialism is rampant, Then O Arjuna, I reincarnate Myself'—says Lord Krishna. Christ, Lincon, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Dayanand, Martin Luther King are a few names who had come to this world with the special task of meeting opposite excesses and restore the equilibrium. Some one who knew Pt. Lalita Nārāyaṇa Mishra could well know that he too belonged to the band of selected ones.

My acquaintance with Lalita Bābū dates back to the early sixties but for some chanced meetings and casual talks I never had a privilege to put his being in a kaleidoscope and have a multi dimensional view of his colourful personality for myself. The opportunity came my way in the winter of 1971. Lalita Bābū had come to Jhanjharpur where I was then the Principal of the local college, Janta College, Jhanjharpur, to muster support for the Congress candidate, Pt. Jagannāth Mishra, (now M. P.) who was seeking election to the Parliament. It was during his brief stay over there that I came in close contact with Lalita Bābū. Thanks to Dr. Jagannāth Mishra, younger brother of Lalita Bābū, now our Chief Minister who brought me closer to Lalita Bābū and made me a man of his confidence afterwards. Lalita Bābū by that time had proved himself an Atlanta unremoved. Meeting a personality of that calibre was a sacred privilege and I was all inhibition. But his capability of inspiring deep affection

in those who knew him well came to my rescue and soon I was well in tune with the waves his elecro-magnetic personality was emitting. Acquaintance had to make room for love. My 'I' had melted into nothingness.

The personality Lalita Bābū disclosed in public or private was wholly attractive one—pre-eminently sunny, high-spirited, generous and robustly self-confident. Throughout his political carrier he showed himself entirely free from political jealousy and personal assertiveness in controversy he was always the fairest, nevertheless most chivalorous, of opponents. Witty, arch, enthusiastic, magnanimous, but never fanatical in pursuit of his own cherished ideal or in his assaults on the ideals of others, but in the main sanely and even severely self critical, Pt. Lalita Nārāyaṇa Mishra stood in most extraordinary contrast to what is generally reported of a politician in society.

Although a politician by training as well as temperament Lalita Bābū was a negation of Wilde's comment on the conduct of politicians. He was a white dove who soared high above in the Blue but had his nest on the earth. He was a '*karmayogi*'. While discharging his duties he placed strict demands on himself. That was the reason why whenever he was given a special assignment he proved indispensable. When things deteriorated for India and Nepal and the trade talk failed and the relation between the two countries seemed to be at the lowest ebb, Lalita Bābū was called upon to perform a charisma and to the utter bewilderment of the Chinese and Pākistānī political puṇḍits he did so. Through his practical approach and convincing arguments he got the thing' finalised and left virtually no problems to be solved again. India conceded nothing. Nepal got everything. That was just the high spirited sprinter's start. When he became the Railway Minister he was welcomed by an unprecedented rail strike comparable to the Docker's strike in England which had shaken the Government there. Ordeal is the great world of life, he knew. And he knew that every responsible man is an Oedipus called to solve the enigma of the sphinx. Different sorts of speculations were being whispered by the birds in the air. Every attempt was being made to discredit him. But the outcome was just an anticlimax. Things that had started with a bang ended simply in smokes. An unprecedented thing had an unprecedented ending. With the firm support of our beloved Prime Minister, Mrs. Indirā Gāndhī, Lalita Bābū once again proved that he was a man of the crisis.

In less than two years the Railways made a headway. Honesty and sincerity became the guiding ideals of the workers. For the first time perhaps they had got someone who could give them justice. Pt. Mishra's success there could be well attributed to his deep insight into the problems of the railway workers. Things could not have been that much easier had he not deviated from the oft-beaten track of bureaucratic handling of the problems and opted for man-to-man-approach policy. He had made himself accessible to one and all to see to it that justice was imparted to everyone who deserved it. Travesty of justice he hated. Flattery was the cult he was alien to. Religion to him was the highest expression of justice.

Duty he adored, friendship he loved. One of the finest flowers of Indian culture that feeds on love and compassion, Lalita Bābū never allowed his friends of the past or the present, political or non-political, rich or poor, to challenge his faith in friendship. I, incidently, remember an inccident. I along with a senior congressman from Bihar was with Lalita Bābū in the Rail Bhawan. He was abruptly asked as to what led him to grant favour to someone who did not have good image in public and was trying his every bit to tarnish his public image. "Once he was my friend and when he reminded me of that I yielded, but to friendship. He had his chips"—came the pet reply. How great was that soul ! Christ knew he would be betrayed by Judas yet he loved him most.

Lalita Bābū was an avowed enemy of poverty. I remember him quoting Bernard Shaw on a "poverty is the worst sin one can be subjected to". And sincerely and painstakingly he tried everything he could to remove poverty from India. His doors were always ajar for the poor and down trodden people. To create job opportunities for the unemployed he devised many schemes. Although he did not live long to see the success of his ideals, but people of the coming generations will see for themselves what he did for them. I remember Swāmī Vivekānanda's last words, "The world would need another Vivekānand to know what this Vivekānand did for this world".

Although Lalita Bābū was a staunch theist, he never tagged himself with a particular religion, cult or creed. Humanism was his religion, man was his God. He was a challenge to Firaque's negative assertion, "Khuda to mil gaya nasehko lekin, zoroorat hai Aadmi ko Aadmi ki". Any attempt of defying him

will be an outright rejection of his philosophy of life. He was just a man, aye, every inch a human being!

Great souls foresee their end. They know that they will have to quit the stage as soon as the works assigned to them by the Omnipotent are complete. Death is inevitable all of us know. We donot know the form death will assume. Great souls know even that, Lalita Bābū had premonition of the approaching end which he had even conveyed to his younger brother Dr. Jagannāth Mishra, our Chief Minister, from Bombay on phone. I, too, vividly remember his last words spoken to me in the saloon when we were journeying together on the fateful day. "The end seems near". This was so clear that he prophetically uttered in his last public meeting on that fateful day at Samastipur "Ham rahen yā nā rahen Bihar baḍhatā hī rahegā." It cannot be a nervous outburst as some of the doctors are trying to prove today. It was a glimpse of the inevitable. Christ had it. Gandhiji had it. Lincon had it. Lalita Bābū had it They could have tried to avoid it. But the work was done. And they knew it. Jesus without cross was nothing but a son of an unmarried girl. They knew that Hercules could not be seated victorious close to the throne of Jupiter unless he entered the pyre.

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well
Treason (?) has done his worst.

The difference to us ! The lamp is shattered. The light in the dust lies dead. The soul has slipped into eternity. We really need something solid to rationalise the loss of Lalita Bābū. Yet we have to. God's ways cannot be challenged. The only thing left for us is the shadow of his nobility, sincerity arrested in our loving memories to guide us through the mazes of life.

In Memoriam

T. N. Jha*

Every one in the land of Mithilā feels today the loss suffered by the tragic death of late lamented L. N. Mishra, the greatest son of the land. Why the land of Mithilā alone, whole of Bihar and nationalists throughout the lenght and breadth of India feel the void which has been created by the untimely premature death of Lalita Bābū under tragic circumstances. We all know that Lalita Bābū was a politician–statesman–gentleman of such Himalayan height that few, if any, can attain that position, that unquestioned loyalty and affection of politicians, teachers, students, administrators of all grades, all provinces, all castes and all religions, which made Lalita Bābū's personality so unique.

What was so great about the man wherein lay the secret of his great popularity with the elite and the masses alike, with men and women of all generations, with artists, film stars, poets, nay every section of India's teeming millions. From my own contact with the great soul for over thirtyfive years, I had known him as my contemporary since my school days when as a student leader he was organising political meetings against the British imperialism—I have come to realise that sincerity was his forte. He was the very incarnation of nobility and sincerity. He lived throughout his life the ideal of "malice towards none and charity for all". In fact, he came so close to the Hindu ideal of a dedicated saint who keeps nothing for himself and radiates charity, compassion all round. To a Christian he would have appeared the very embodiment of the Lord for like the Lord and His chosen men he cared for the poor, the sick and the down-trodden. It was this Christian compassion, this burning passion to improve the lot of his community, region, state and country that took him to politics.

In politics again he rose to eminence and enjoyed the confidence and trust of our first Prime Minister Nehru, our first Chief Minister late S. K. Sinha and

* With regrets we have to inform the readers that Dr. T. N. Jha, Principal, Darbhanga Medical College, died of heart-attack in 1980.

our present leader Smt. Indirā Gāndhī not because he was a politicking type but because he exerted and asserted his democratic power for effecting development, modernization and change in the backward states and backward regions in the state. The Kosī, Bihar's river of sorrow, was tamed and barrage built to the benefit of farmers and labourers, thanks to the advocacy of then a young parliamentarian, Lalita Bābū. The age old handicrafts of Mithilā and men and women engaged in them received a new lease of life when as foreign trade minister Lalita Bābū gave a boost to the export of Madhubanī paintings and other traditional crafts. Thus families which were finding it difficult to eke out their existence have been granted decent living and respect. Communication being the heart of modern age, it was natural for a far sighted democrat like Lalita Bābū to accord high priority to that. The extension of broad gauge railway line upto Muzaffarpur, the introduction of convenient short and long distance trains, the enforcement of discipline in the railway administration where he has left an indelible stamp as an administrator—all |bear witness to his zeal and enthusiasm to improve the channels of commnnication of the backward North Bihar. Since education is the foundation on which rests the total developmental structure, late L. N. Mishra was concerned with the development of higher learning, research and fundamental experiments. It was to ensure all these and to bring backward region like Mithilā up on the educational map of India that he lent support to the establishment of a modern university at Darabhaṅgā, which in right spirit, is now named after him. As an old time friend and as an educationist whenever I discussed any proposal to bring any improvement in the teaching of medical faculty at the Darabhaṅgā Medical College and Hospital and to improve the equipments of north Bihar's only hospital, worth the name, late Lalita Bābū evinced keenest interest and always assured me of his fullest cooperarion. As the Principal of Darabhaṅgā Medical College and as Superintendent of the Darabhaṅgā Medical College Hospital, I have been trying my humble bit to incorporate those schemes which Lalita Bābū had approved of.

As a political leader Lalita Bābū had a value pattern which was so different from the common rung of politicians. His training in Economics at the hands of such eminent economists as late Dr. Gyān Chand and late Dr. G. P. Sinhā had convinced him that the real wealth of any region, province or coun-

try could not be exploited to the optimum point unless the people were imbued with the sense of dedication for the maximum utilisation of its natural resources. The sharp economist that he was he soon realised that Bihar with such an abundance of natural resousces lagged behind because the energy which should have been harnessed for exploiting the natural resources was frittered away in cut-throat political rivalry, in casteism, in idle gossip, in cheap political propaganda. Being close to Nehruji Lalita Bābū had learnt the philosophy of Robert Frost that "he had to go miles and miles before he could sleep" and that "ārāma harāmo hai". So as a leader of Bihar it was the constant effort of Lalita Bābū to bury casteism in politics. Those who have watched the political scene of Bihar in last few years would recall that in the Congress party Lalita Bābū encouraged the politicians of the backward class, fought for getting them more representation, and encouraged the formation of such Congress Cabinets which cut across caste lines. It was a planned programme of Lalita Bābū to get more Bihārī public workers, intellectuals and politicians associated with various national boards, commissions, and concerns so that they could be exposed to wider horizon and better perspectives which they could imitate for Bihar to make it a model state. It is common knowledge that he encouraged industrialists and businessmen from more advanced states to come forward with capital and enterprise to set up new industries in Bihar to solve its manifold problems.

But he was not a stark Marxist–materialist who subordinates higher values of life at the altar of materialism. His family background and his early socialisation had instilled in respect for spiritual values. Throughout his life he gave precedence to religious values, spiritual Gurus who bring new gospel of love and light in our dark materialist age. His love of art and letters, his patronage to the poets, dramatists, radio artists, his respect for the learned, his religious disposition as reflected in his devoted 'pūjā' at all shrines and charity to all religious institutions–all are of a piece in that all go to show that Lalita Bābū like the skylark was the "type of the wise who soared but never roamed, true to the kindred points of heaven and home".

We have all become poorer by his death. But we shall be betraying the the great memory of the great leader if we retreat from the path shown to us by him. He wanted us to be deeply involved in the gigantic task of national

reconstruction by concerted regional planning, by inculcating qualities of hard work and by ways of love and nonviolence. It is lucky that we have the guidance of his younger brother at the helm of affairs who has taken the vow to fulfil the unfulfilled dreams of late Lalita Bābū to give Bihar a new image. Our fittest tribute to the memory of late Lalita Bābū would be to lend our unstinted support and cooperation to our Chief Minister, Dr. Jagannāth Mishra who wants to translate the vision and dream of Lalita Bābū for an ideal state as a part of great Indian Republic.

ललित बाबू : एक संस्मरण

जयनाथ मिश्र

जहिना शरद ऋतुक चन्द्रमा अपन लालित्य सँ–अपन धवल शीतल किरण सँ आ' वसन्त ऋतुक पवन अपन लालित्य सँ अपन शीतल मन्द सुगन्धस्पर्श सँ जन-मनकें प्रसन्न कए दैछ, तहिना ललित बाबू अपन लालित्य सँ—अपन-मन-वचन-कर्म सँ जन-मन कें प्रसन्न कए दैत छलाह। वास्तवमे ओ 'ललित छलाह'—अपन नामकें सार्थक कएने छलाह।

ललित बाबू सँ प्रथम परिचय होएबाक सौभाग्य हमरा १९४५–४६ ई० मे भेल। ओहि समयमे हम पुस्तक-भंडारक मैनेजरक पद पर आसीन छलहुँ। ललित बाबू पटना कॉलेजमे अर्थशास्त्रक छात्र छलाह। प्रतिभावान तँ ओ जन्मजात छलाह। से, ओही समयमे—अपन छात्र-जीवनेमे ओ अर्थशास्त्रक एकटा पुस्तक लिखलन्हि। लिखलाक बाद ओ ओकर प्रकाशनक हेतु हमरा लग आबए-जाए लगलाह। प्रकाशित भेला पर ई पुस्तक ओ स्वर्गीय मुख्यमंत्री डॉ० श्रीकृष्ण सिंह कें समर्पित कएलन्हि। पुस्तक पढ़ि श्रीबाबू हुनक भूरि-भूरि प्रशंसा कएलन्हि। एतबे नहि, एहि पुस्तक सँ विद्वत्समाजमे—सेहो ललित बाबूक प्रशंसा होमये लागल। ओहि अल्प-वयसमे अर्थ-शास्त्र सन कठिन विषयमे ललित बाबूक एहेन योग्यता देखि विद्वान् लोकनि मुक्त-कंठ सँ हुनक प्रशंसा करए लगलाह। ओ विद्वान् लोकनिक बीच चर्चाक विषय बनि गेलाह। अस्तु।

एकर बादो हमरा ओहि ठाम ललित बाबूक आएब-जाएब बन्द नहि भेलैन्हि। हुनक शील-स्वभाव सँ हमहूँ एतेक आप्यायित छलहुँ, जे—हमरो हुनका बिनु नीक नहि लागए। यदि पाँचो-सात दिन हुनका सँ भेट नहि होअए तँ हमहुँ उत्कंठित भए हुनक बाट ताकए लागी। बूझि पड़ए, जेना ललित बाबूक हाथमे जादूक छड़ी छलन्हि, की कंठमे वशीकरण-मन्त्र छलन्हि, जे—ओकर प्रभाव सँ, जेकरा एको बेरि हुनका सँ भेट होइक, से हुनक वशवर्त्ती भए जाए—प्रसंशक भए जाए।

१९४२ ई० आन्दोलन जखन प्रारम्भ भेल, तखन ललित बाबू पढ़िते छलाह; किन्तु ओही समयमे ओ राजनीति सँ सम्बद्ध भए गेलाह। अंग्रेज द्वारा देशक शोषण देखि ओ आरंभहि सँ दुखी रहैत छलाह—अपन मातृभूमिक दुर्दशा आ जनताक गरीबी देखि हुनक खून खौलि रहल छलन्हि। ओ अवसरक ताकमे छलाह। एतबेमे १९४२ ई० क आन्दोलन प्रारम्भ भेल। ललित बाबूकें अवसर भेटि गेलैन्हि। ओ छात्र-संगठन कए आन्दोलन मे कूदि पड़लाह। एहि हेतु अंग्रेज शासक द्वारा ओ दण्डित—सेहो भेलाह। कारागारक यातना—सेहो हुनका सहए पड़लन्हि। किन्तु ललित बाबू एहि सँ डरएवाला नहि छलाह। ओ अपन दृढ़ निश्चय सँ तनिको विचलित नहि भेलाह—अपन मार्ग पर लगातार बढ़िते रहलाह।

१९४७ ई० में जखन देश स्वतंत्र भेल, तखन ललित बाबू अपनाकें सब तरहें देशक सेवामे समर्पित कए देल। देशक गरीबी मेटएबाक हेतु ओ' तन-मन धन सँ लागि गेलाह। जनताक स्नेह तँ ओ' पाबिए चुकल छलाह। से, जनताक आग्रह सँ ओ' लोकसभाक सदस्यताक हेतु ठाढ़ भेलाह—ठाढ़ेटा' नहि भेलाह, अपरिमित बहुमत सँ विजयी— सेहो भेलाह। बादमे जखन-जखन लोकसभाक चुनाव भेलैक, तखन-तखन ओ' सदस्यताक हेतु ठाढ़ भेलाह आ' अजेय बहुमत सँ विजयी होइत रहलाह।

ललित बाबू एकटा' ई बड़ पैघ विशेषता छालन्हि, जे आन ठाम भेटब असंभव। ओ' उच्च-सँ-उच्च पद पर जा पहुँचलाह, तइयो हुनक स्वभावमे तनिको परिवर्त्तन नहि भेलन्हि। ओ' जेहने दयालु आ' कोमल-चित्त आरंभमे छलाह, तेहने उच्चपदासीन भेनहुँ रहि गेलाह। हुनका हेतु जाति-पाँति आ' धनिक-गरीबमे कोनोटा' अन्तर नहि छल—कोनोटा' भेद-भाव नहि छल। हुनका हेतु सब एके समान छल। हुनक फाटक सभक हेतु खुजल रहैत छलन्हि। ककरो कोनोटा' रोक-टोक नहि छलैक। ओ' सभक छलथीन्ह आ सभ हुनके छलन्हि। ओ' सभक सुख-दुःखमे साझी रहैत छलाह। एकर परिणाम ई छलैक, जे—जे कियो अपन सुख-दुःख लए हुनका ओहि ठाम पहुँचए, से कियो निराश भय नहि घुमए। सभकें यथासाध्य हुनका सँ सहायता भेटबे करैक। हुनक सहायता सँ कतेकक बेटीक विवाह, कतेकक बाल-बच्चाक शिक्षा आ' कतेक शिक्षित बेरोजगार युवककें जीविकालाभ भलैक, तेकर गणना करब असंभव।

धर्म-कर्मसें ललित बाबूकें बड़ प्रेम छलन्हि। ओ' मिथिलाक अनेको टूटल-फूटल मन्दिरक पुनर्निर्माण करबाए ओकरा नवरूप देलन्हि। एतबे नहि, स्वयं सब दिन पूजा-पाठ—सेहो करैत छलाह। अपन परम्परा धार्मिक मर्यादा सँ ओ तनिको विचलित नहि भेलाह।

ई हम पहिले कहि आ ल छी, जे—'ललित बाबू वास्तवमे ललित छलाह—अपन नामकें सार्थक कएने छलाह।' से अपन जन्म-भूमि मिथिलाक ललित कला सँ तँ ओ' एतेक प्रभावित छलाह, जे ओकरा सब तरहें प्रोत्साहन दए विश्वव्यापी बनाए देल। देश-विदेशमे—सर्वत्र मिथिलाक 'ललित कला' सँ लोक आप्यायित अछि—मुग्ध अछि। सर्वत्र एकर माँग भए रहल अछि। सरकारकें—सेहो मिथिलाक लोककलाक निर्यात सँ पर्याप्त आय भए रहलैक अछि। एहि सँ कलाकार लोकनिकें—सेहो जीविकाक साधन उपलब्ध भए रहलन्हि अछि।

अपन जन्मभूमि मिथिलाक प्रति तँ ललित बाबूकें एतेक भक्ति छलन्हि, जे—आजन्म ओ मिथिलाक सेवामे लागल रहलाह। सदा-सर्वदा सँ उपेक्षिता मिथिला हुनक सेवा सँ नव रूप धारण करए लागल। कमला-कोशीक प्रलयङ्कर प्रवाह सँ जनए यातायात अवरुद्ध भय गेल छल, ततए ओ' रेल गाड़ीक जाल बिछ देल। किन्तु हमरा लोकनिक दुर्भाग्य जे—अचानक एहि दिग्गजकें ग्राह ग्रसि लेलक। अतएव हुनक बहुतो अभिलषित कार्य पूर्ण नहि भए सकल। यदि ओ' जीवित रहितथि तँ निश्चित छल, जे—मिथिला एक अभिनव रूप धारण कए लैत।

बादमे तँ हुनका सँ हमरा कौटुम्बिक संबन्ध—सेहो भए गेल। १९५९ ई० क बात थीक। हमरा अपन भतीजी—वीणाक विवाह कर्त्तव्य छल। संयोगवश ललित बाबू पटना आएल छलह आ' 'कोशीरेस्ट हाउस'मे ठहरल छलाह। हम हुनका फोन कएलयन्हि, जे—'हम किछु आवश्यक कार्यवश अपने सँ भेंट करए

चाहैत छी। हम कखन आउ?' ओ' उत्तर देलन्हि, जे—'अपने किएक आएब ? हमहीं अबैत छी।' हम कहलिऐन्हि, जे—'एहेन कार्य अछि, जे—हमरे आएब उचित ओतए।' ओ' उत्तर देलन्हि, जे—'जखनहि आबए चाही, आएल जाओ।' से, जखन हम हुनका ओतए पहुँचलहुँ आ' अपन अभिलाषा व्यक्त करैत मिश्र-जीक (श्रीजगन्नाथमिश्रक) हेतु निवेदन कएलहुँ तँ ओ' प्रसन्न होइत कहलन्हि, जे—'एहिमे पुछवाक कोन काज ? जगन्नाथजी अपनहिक थिकाह। अवश्य लए जइऔन्ह। एहि सँ हमरा लोकनिक स्नेह-सूत्र सदा-सर्वदाक हेतु आओर दृढ़ भए जाएत।' से, हुनक कृपा सँ ई सम्बन्ध—ई स्नेह-सूत्र दृढ़ भए गेल।

आओर की लिखू ? जखन-जखन हमरा ललित बाबूक स्मरण होइछ तखन-तखन हमर मन गह्वरित भए जाइछ आ' नेत्र सजल भए जाइछ। एखन्ही हुनक स्मरण सँ हमर हाथशिथिल भए गेल अछि। तँ एतबे लीखि हम कलम रखैत छी।



वे जो आज भी वर्त्तमान हैं

डॉ० कुमार किशोर मंडल

मनुष्य का सही आकलन उसके स्वर्गारोहण के पश्चात् होता है। जीवन-काल में मनुष्य वैयक्तिक राग, द्वेष और स्वार्थ के कारण सामान्यतः एक रंगीन चश्मा धारण करने को विवश हो जाता है। काल इस चश्मे को उतार फेंकता है। ललित बाबू हमारे बीच एक अत्यन्त गतिशील जन्मजात नेता की तरह रहे। यह गुण उनमें उनके छात्र-जीवन से ही विकसित हो रहा था। ब्रिटिश-शासन के विरुद्ध छात्रों को उकसाना, गाँधीजी की योजनाओं में सम्मिलित होने के लिए उनका संगठन करना और अभावग्रस्त सहपाठियों तथा सहयोगियों को आर्थिक सहायता पहुँचाना, उनका स्वभाव-सा बन गया था। अपना विचार किसी पर लादने की जगह वे दूसरों के विचारों को अपने उद्देश्यों की ओर मोड़ देने की कला में निष्णात थे। ऐसा करने से एक तो उनके मित्रों की विचार-स्वतंत्रता का हनन नहीं होता था, दूसरे उन्हें भी सहज रूप से राष्ट्रीय उद्देश्यों की पूर्ति में सहायता मिल जाती थी।

एक अनुज के सहपाठी होने के नाते ललित बाबू का सहज वात्सल्य मुझे प्राप्त था। उन्होंने मुझे जीवन के हर मोड़ पर प्रोत्साहित, प्रभावित और लाभान्वित किया था। कांग्रेस में वे ही मुझे ले आये थे और जीवन का कोई अवसर मुझे याद नहीं, जब उन्होंने मेरा सही मार्ग-दर्शन नहीं किया हो। उन्नति के पथ पर बढ़ते हुए देखकर उन्हें उतनी ही प्रसन्नता होती थी, जितनी किसी पारिवारिक सदस्य के लिए हो सकती थी।

ललित बाबू आधुनिक भारत के उन उन्नायकों में से थे, जिन्होंने पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू की संरक्षता में अपना राजनैतिक जीवन प्रारंभ किया था और श्रीमती गाँधी के अटूट विश्वास-पात्र सहयोगी के रूप में शतशः उपलब्धियाँ जनता को दी थीं। श्रीमती गाँधी के कार्य-क्रमों में उनका दृढ़ विश्वास था और वे उनके कार्यान्वयन के लिए सतत प्रयत्नशील थे। विदेश-व्यापार, रेल, सुरक्षा उत्पादन, अर्थ आदि क्षेत्रों में राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर जो विकासात्मक कार्य उन्होंने किए थे, वे चिरस्मरणीय हैं।

बिहार के वे आधुनिक निर्माता थे। केन्द्र में रहकर इस उपेक्षित और निर्धन राज्य के बहुविधि विकास के लिए उन्होंने कुछ भी उठा नहीं रखा था। राजनैतिक दृष्टि से वे इस राज्य के सूत्रधार थे और इस राज्य के सभी वर्ग के लोग उन्हें अपना अभिभावक मानते थे। केवल काँग्रेस के सहयोगी ही नहीं, दूसरे दल वाले नेता भी उनके वैयक्तिक गुणों का बहुत अधिक समादर करते थे। सैकड़ों ऐसे उदाहरण हैं, जिनसे यह सिद्ध होता है कि उन्होंने गाढ़े वक्त पर सारे राजनैतिक भेद-भाव भुला कर अपने निंदकों की भी

महत्त्वपूर्ण सहायता की थी। इस राज्य के शिक्षाविद्, साहित्यकार और सामान्य लोग उनके विशेष प्रशंसक थे, क्योंकि सबके लिए उनके मन में आदर के भाव थे और वे इस राज्य का विकास प्रत्येक दिशा में देखना चाहते थे।

ललित बाबू की उदारता की कहानियाँ, संभव है, कुछ दिनों बाद विश्वसनीय भी नहीं रह जाएँ, क्योंकि आज का स्वार्थग्रस्त मनुष्य धीरे-धीरे यह सोचने में अपने को विवश पा रहा है कि कोई भी आदमी किसी की सहायता निःस्वार्थ रूप से भी कर सकता है। यह बात ठीक है कि कर्ण की तरह ललित बाबू दान देते समय पात्र-अपात्र का ध्यान नहीं देते थे। इसीलिए यदि किसी ने कवच-कुँडल ही माँग लिए, तो देने में हिचके नहीं! दान की यह महिमा ललित बाबू के साथ ही शायद खत्म हो गई।

इस देश के जिन तत्त्वों ने उनकी हत्या की, उन्होंने इतना भी नहीं सोचा कि जिस क्षण उनकी हत्या की गई, वह क्षण कितना परोपकारी और महान था। यह घटना यदि चुनाव लड़ते हुए या किसी राजनैतिक मंच पर किसी विवाद के समय हुई होती, तो इसकी व्यथा शायद इतनी दारुण न होती, लेकिन अपने ही राज्य में अत्यन्त वैज्ञानिक उपकरणों से युक्त रेलव्यवस्था के महत्त्वपूर्ण उद्घाटन के क्षणों में, जो योजना अमीर-गरीब सब तरह की जनता के लिए समर्पित थी—यह करुण दृश्य उपस्थित हो गया। आज बिहार को उतनी ममतामयी दृष्टि से कौन देखेगा। कौन इस मिट्टी को इतना प्यार करेगा।

दिक्-काल सभी घटनाओं को अपने में समेट लेते हैं, लेकिन कुछ व्यक्तित्व अपने जनोपयोगी कृतित्व और आह्लादक व्यक्तित्व के कारण दिक्-काल को चुनौती दे जाते हैं। हमारे ललित बाबू उन्हीं में से एक थे, जो नहीं रहकर भी हर जगह वर्त्तमान हैं।



Lalita Bābū–an illustrious Son of Mithilā

Jata Shankar Das

From time immemorial has Mithilā been a land of great seers, sages and philosophers. It has the good fortune to be the birth place of Janaka, Yājñavalkya, Kapila and Lord Mahāvīra. Many rare flowers of knowledge and learning blossomed in the fertile land of Mithilā which spread their sweet fragrance far and wide. In this chain, Lalita Bābū was born in the 20th century on 2. 2. 1923 in Mithilā to rise to the pinacle of glory by dint of sincere and dedicated service to the people.

Pre–Independdence Days :

I had the privilege to meet Lalita Bābū in early 1940 when immediately after the outbreak of 2nd World War the students in Bihar organised a convention of Bihar Students Federation at Laheriāsarāi. In 1941, when I joined C. M. College, I came in closer contact with Lalita Bābū. Though a student, he considered it his sacred duty to fight the Britishers and, therefore, as student leader he took active part in organisation of student congress. He moved from one school/college to another school/college, exhorting the students to organise students union and to rise in revolt against the Britishers.

In 1942, there was the great 'Quit India Movement' started by Mahātmā Gāndhī, the father of the Nation. Lalita Bābū plunged head long in the Movement as he believed that to throw the yoke of slavery is the primary responsibility of our countrymen. He organised mass demonstrations and public meetings and himself lead them. He moved from one hostel to another at dead of night to organise the freedom struggle. At last he fell under the clutches of the police, and he was arrested. I met him in jail also and found that he was in high spirits. Even from jail, he sent words to his faithful comrades to continue to fight to the finish. Undeterred by the prosecutions, hardships and sufferings, Lalita Bābū struggled to win the freedom for his country.

After release from jail we met very often and exchanged happy reminiscences of our jail life. With burning flames of independence, Lalita Bābū con-

dered no sacrifice is too great for freedom struggle. He inspired the students by his emotional and thought-provoking speech which emboldend the students to continue the struggle with added vigour and enthusiasm. It is said that 'Child is the Father of Man' and exactly so, Lalita Bābū was a leader from his boyhood.

Post-Independence Days :

After Independence Lalita Bābū shifted his headquarters to Patna and I also came to Patna in 1949. Here our association was renewed and became more frequent. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our beloved popular Prime Minister laid stress on economic reconstruction of our society. He advocated drawing up of Five Year Plans so that our scanty resources be put to profitable use, laying down priorities, he wanted that poverty, hunger, illiteracy and ill-health must be banished from our sacred land. Lalita Bābū joined Economic and Planning Cell in B. P. C. C. as its Convener. I also had interest in the subject and so we sat together for hours and discussed tenets of economic planning. We held academic discussions on various plans viz, the industrialist's plan, people's plan, etc. He stood for greater participation of teachers, professors and litterateurs in the preparation of economic plans which he considered as Magna Charta of the down trodden and exploited people.

A Man of Masses :

Lalita Bābū believed in mass action and he undertook leadership of mass movement without much care of his safety. His contribution to the taming of the Kośī–the river of sorrow–in Bihar has been magnificent. He organised mass participation in the embankment of the Kośī. He spent days and nights in the sandy Kośī area for months, travelled wide from village, organised Bhārat Sewak Samāj and accepted the challenge of the nature gracefully. Perhaps in no part of the country there has been greater people's participation in the welfare activities as in Kośī area. Under the inspiring leadership of Shrī Gulzārilāl Nandā, Lalita Bābū took up the reigns of Bhārat Sevak Samāj in Bihar. He himself carried earth in the basket over his head to the embankment site and thereby inspired thousands of young boys to undertake voluntarily the physical labour for the good of the masses. The way in which he succeeded in getting

clearance for the Kośī Canal from the Govt. of India as also in obtaining collaboration of the Govt. of Nepal both for eastern and western canals, will be ever remembered by the people of the area with gratitude.

A Great Political Leader :

Lalita Bābū rose in politics from an humble freedom fighter to the exalted position of Cabinet Minister in the Centre. He started from scratch and reached great heights. He entered Parliament as a Member and was soon tipped as Parliamentary Secretary by Pandit Nehru. By his sincere devotion to duties, he endeared himself to his partymen. He was elevated to the position of Deputy Minister and Minister of State and subsequently to the full–fledged cabinet rank. Very few of his cabinet colleagues rose to eminense step by step. He excelled many of his senior colleagues in his organising capability and leadership virtues. During later part of his life, he identified himself with Bihar so much so and the High Command in the Congress realised that Bihar is Lalita Bābū's State and he has to manage its affairs and various ministries worked under his command. In Calcutta Session of the All India Congress Committee, Lailta Bābū chose to contest for the seat in the Working Committee and he won by an over–whelming majority which demonstrated that Lalita Bābū was popular not only amongst Bihar delegates but had large following in other states also. Very often when I went to pay respects to Lalita Bābū at his 9, Akbar Road, New Delhi, I found that a large number of leaders and workers from different states in the country right from the Himalayas in the north to the Cape of Comorin in the south and Assam and Nagaland in the east and Gujarat and Maharashtra in the west, flocked around him and they all were received warmly. He had full grip over the politics in different states. By his sheer dedication to politics and understanditg of the problem of the masses, he reached great heights in public life of the country. He recited very often :—

"The woods are deep,
The path is long.
I have many miles to go,
Before I can rest."

A Great Lover of Mithilā and Maithilī :

Lalita Bābū was first a Maithila. He had great love and regards for his mother-tongue, Maithilī. He worked enthusiastically for all round development of Maithilī language. He rendered immense assistance to Chetanā Samiti. Maithilī organisations in general and Chetanā Samiti in particular received substantial support and patronage from him. His contribution to the construction of Vidyāpati Bhawan in Patna is very substantial.

Lalita Bābū was very much concerned with the poverty and the economic backwardness of Mithilā. He believed that unless proper infra-structure is developed in Mithilā, it will not prosper. He worked for extension of railway lines and road and construction of bridges so that even the remotest corner of Mithilā be easily accessible and suitably connected with the State Capital and other industrial areas. It is under his inspiring leadership that the idea was mooted for restarting the Asoka Paper Mills and Thakur paper Mills. He advocated for setting up of jute mills in the area. He wanted that a net work of small scale and cottage industries should develop so that educated people may get gainful employment and thereby contribute their best for economic prosperity of the land. It is no exaggeration that Mithilā University, for which people were agitating since long, would not have come into being without Lalita Bābū's strenuous and ceaseless efforts.

His love for art was immense. He found that women folk in Mithilā practised arts and crafts as their noble hobby, some artisans, of course, treat them as means of livelihood. Painting in Mithilā is a century old profession. It is part of simple uninquisitive character of its people. It was Lalita Bābū who could attract the large eyes of the world on this craft and earned loud laurels. As Minister of Foreign Trade, he realised the great export potentiality of Madhubanī paintings. He sent various teams abroad to explore its market. He set up centres of All India Handicraft Board at Madhubanī and Benipatti to assist in the development in this craft. Today Mithilā painting is fast capturing the world of fashions and the credit for it goes to none but Lalita Bābū. He had two objects in view in popularising Madhubanī painting—one was to make the arts and crafts of Mithilā known all over the world and the other object was to earn foreign exchange for the country and livelihood to the artisans of his motherland.

Lalita Bābū as a Man :

Lalita Bābū was an embodiment of what is called 'Manhood'. He possessed noble characters of a man. He was very social in his behaviour. There was something of a magic in his character that whosoever came in his contact once, he adopted him as his great well-wisher and guide. He derived great pleasure in rendering assistance to other. His doors was always open for all categories of people, no matter whether he was a political leader or an humble citizen. His greatest virtue lay in the fact that he never forgot his old friends and was always cheerful and unassuming. Lalita Bābū was a man of great amiable temperament who knew no pride and malice. He was really loveable and adored what he touched. People talked highly of his large heartedness and benevolent nature. He was a gentleman from the core of his heart. Lalita Bābū was 'Lalita' in his speech and behaviour and was great exponent of Lalita Kalā. It is on account of profound qualities of his head and heart that the entire country in general and Mithilā in particular still weeps bitterly in his sad demise and I join thousands of his mourners and admirers and pray for peace to the departed soul.

शब्दों से परे

डॉ० श्यामनन्दन किशोर

......ललित बाबू मेरे लिए शब्दों से परे हैं। उनके भीतर एक ऐसी मसृणता थी, जिसे शब्द बाँध नहीं पाते। उनके व्यक्तित्व में एक ऐसा चुम्बक था जिसकी शक्ति आँकी नहीं जा सकती और उनमें मित्रों के लिए एक ऐसी दुर्बलता थी, जिस पर बड़ी से बड़ी शक्तियाँ न्योछावर की जा सकती हैं। लोग उनकी राजनैतिक शक्ति, देश-विदेशव्यापी प्रभुत्व, उनकी अक्षय सहायता-शक्ति और विराट संगठन-सामर्थ्य के प्रशंसक हैं, मैं उनकी उन दुर्बलताओं का भक्त हूँ, जो छोटे-से-छोटे व्यक्ति, निर्धन से निर्धन कार्य-कर्त्ता, अदना से अदना कलाकार और बड़े दुश्मनों को गले लगाने तथा बिना किसी प्रान्त, जाति, वर्ग या सीमा के सबकी अनवरत सहायता करते रहने में निहित थी।

ललित बाबू से मेरा सम्बन्ध बहुत गहरा था, बहुत पुराना नहीं। उनसे मेरा परिचय जगन्नाथ जी (तब के बिहार विश्वविद्यालय के यशस्वी प्राध्यापक और अब के बिहार के लोक-प्रिय मुख्यमंत्री) ने मुजफ्फरपुर में कराया था। एक प्रसिद्ध राजनेता और एक सफल केन्द्रीय शासक के रूप में मैंने उनके बारे में जितना सुना था, उससे अधिक जगन्नाथ जी के अन्तरंग पारिवारिक मित्र होने के कारण उनके आन्तरिक गुणों के सम्बन्ध में सुनता रहता था। आज भी मुझे वह रात याद है जब भाई जगन्नाथ जी ने मुझसे कहा था कि कल ही शुभ दिन है। "भैया आ रहे हैं, आप मेरे साथ चलिएगा। अपनी किताबें भी भेंट कीजिएगा। वे आपको बहुत पसन्द करेंगे।" और उनकी आँखों में अपने भाई की अगुवानी की चमक नाच उठी। पता नहीं, जगन्नाथ जी ने मेरे सम्बन्ध में ललित बाबू को क्या कहा कि उन्होंने कमरे से निकलते ही मुझे छाती से लगा दिया और आजन्म मुझे जगन्नाथ जी की तरह ही छोटा भाई मानते रहे।

विरोध के कठिन भूचाली क्षणों में भी मैंने ललित बाबू को सुदृढ़ देखा। लेकिन जब भी उनको कोई विश्वास-पात्र, उनका अपना उन्हें धोखा देता, वे बच्चों की तरह विचलित हो जाते। ललित बाबू ने जीवन भर कृतज्ञता ढोने में बड़प्पन समझा। कृतघ्नता न तो वे स्वयं कर सकते थे और न किसी की बर्दाश्त कर सकते थे। जिन दिनों लोक सभा में उन पर चौतरफा प्रहार किया जा रहा था, मैं उन दिनों दिल्ली गया था। उन्होंने मुझे प्रसंगवश कहा था कि 'लोग मुझे मेरे मरने के बाद पहचानेंगे। मैंने अपने लिए कुछ भी नहीं जोड़ा है। जो कुछ किया है, देश के लिए, देश की जनता के लिए!' और आज उनकी वह बात सच निकली, क्योंकि प्रायः ऐसा देखा जाता है कि राजसत्ताधारियों के जीवन-काल में उन्हें जो सम्मान मिलता है, वह अधिकांश किराये का होता है। स्वार्थान्ध लोगों की स्तुतियाँ उन्हें सहज ही प्राप्त हो जाती हैं, लेकिन सत्ता से हटते ही या मृत्यु के पश्चात् उनका नामलेवा नहीं रह जाता। लेकिन ललित बाबू की विशेषता रही कि उनके स्वर्गारोहण के पश्चात् दिनानुदिन उनका सुयश बढ़ता ही जा रहा है। अपने जीवन-काल में उन्होंने अपने नाम पर एक भी संस्था खुलने नहीं दी लेकिन आज अनेक संस्थानों या प्रतिष्ठानों ने अपने साथ उनका नाम जोड़ कर अपने को गौरवान्वित किया है। उनके निधन के पश्चात् उनके प्रति जो श्रद्धांजलियाँ अर्पित की गईं, जीवन भर विरोध में बोलने वालों ने भी जो सम्मान प्रकट किये, वह दुर्लभ है। उनके अंतिम दर्शन के

लिए उमड़ने वाली भीड़, उनकी याद में रोने वाले लोगों की संख्या अगणित थी; और आज भी उनकी स्मृति में श्रद्धा के फूल चढ़ाने वाले सभी श्रेणी के लोग बड़ी संख्या में मिलते हैं।

ललित बाबू अर्थशास्त्र के विद्वान थे और उन्होंने अंग्रेजी शासन के कुपरिणामों से उत्पन्न आर्थिक स्थितियों का गहरा अध्ययन प्रस्तुत किया था। विदेश-व्यापार-मंत्री के रूप में उन्होंने भारत की आर्थिक स्थिति को सुधारा था और पहली बार बिहार की लोक-कला को अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय-प्रतिष्ठा दी थी। रेल-मंत्री के रूप में उन्होंने देश के सभी पिछड़े क्षेत्रों में रेल की लाइनें बिछाईं और बिहार में जनता की वास्तविक सुख-सुविधा से रेल को जोड़कर करोड़ों व्यक्तियों के आशीर्वाद भाजन बने। दूसरों को यात्रा की सुख-सुविधा देते-देते वे स्वयं ही महा यात्रा पर चले गये।

क्षमाशीलता और दानशीलता उनके स्वभाव के दो अपरिहार्य अंग थे। झुक जाने पर वे बड़े से बड़े शत्रु को उपकृत कर देते थे और माँगने पर वे ऋण लेकर भी किसी को निराश नहीं लौटाते थे। उनसे किसने पाया और बदले में उन्हें किसने कितने डंक दिये—यह एक अलिखित इतिहास रह जाएगा। आज अधिक से अधिक उनकी याद वे करते हैं, जिन्होंने उनसे कम से कम पाया। लेन-देन का यह हिसाब मैं भौतिक क्षेत्र का कर रहा हूँ, भावनात्मक क्षेत्र का नहीं। अनेक ने जीवन भर उनका अखंड विश्वास, अशेष स्नेह और अक्षय प्रेम पाया। अनेक हृदयों में आज भी उनके लिए उतना ही सम्मान भरा हुआ है। अनेक उनके घोर मित्र, अनेक उनके सहयोगी-सहकर्मी आज भी उनके नाम की माला जपते हुए उनके यश का विस्तार कर रहे हैं।

ललित बाबू वात्सल्य-मूर्त्ति थे। वे गरीब से गरीब सम्बन्धी का सार्वजनिक रूप से चरण-स्पर्श करते थे और छोटे से छोटे कलाकार को सिर नवाते थे। जगन्नाथ जी को अपने बेटे के समान प्यार करते थे। दोनों भाइयों का प्रेम आज भी दुनिया के लिए एक आदर्श है।

ईश्वर, पूजा-पाठ, शास्त्र, ज्योतिष—इन सबमें ललित बाबू की अविचल आस्था थी। ललित बाबू एक-एक मन्दिर में जाते, श्रद्धा विह्वल भावों से नतमस्तक होते और एक बंद लिफाफा मूर्त्ति के चरणों में डालकर इस झटके से लौट आते कि किसी व्यक्ति को उनके प्रति कृतज्ञता ज्ञापित करने या सम्मान प्रकट करने का अवसर न रहे।

कितना लिखूँ, क्या-क्या लिखूँ। पहले सुनता था कि रेल की समानान्तर पटरियाँ कभी मिलती नहीं, अब गणित ने यह प्रमाणित कर दिया है कि समानान्तर रेखाएँ भी कभी कहीं मिल जाती हैं, लेकिन दोनों रेल की पटरियों के बीच एक 'प्लेटफॉर्म' पर आड़ी-तिरछी भीड़ से मिलने वाले उस व्यक्ति विशेष से भेंट नहीं हो सकती, जो समस्तीपुर की नृशंस हत्या का शिकार हो गया।...... कोई बात नहीं, 'प्लेटफार्म' पर रुके मुसाफिर किसी न किसी गन्तव्य की ओर जाते हैं, आँखों से ओझल होना ही है।

ललित बाबू जिये तो खूब, मरे तो खूब। जिये तो दानवीर की तरह, मरे तो दानवीर की तरह। जीवन को ही नहीं मौत को भी कुछ दे गए। ललित बाबू के जीवन के ग्राफ में उतार था ही नहीं—शिखर पर चढ़ते-चढ़ते आकाश में गुम हो गऐ।